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Ethiopian Air Force

The **Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF)** is the air service branch of the Ethiopian National Defense Force. It plays a crucial role in protecting Ethiopia's airspace, providing support to ground forces, and assisting in civil operations during times of war and peace.

Historical Background

- **Foundation:** The Ethiopian Air Force was established on August 19, 1929. Its origins can be traced back to Emperor Haile Selassie's fascination

with aviation after witnessing a demonstration by the British Royal Air Force in 1922.

- **Early Years:** The initial fleet included aircraft like the Potez 25 biplane and the Junkers W 33c. The air force played a significant role in various historical conflicts, including the Battle of Anchem in 1930.

Structure and Command

- **Personnel:** The Ethiopian Air Force consists of approximately 5,000 personnel.

- **Leadership:** The current Chief of the Air Force is Lieutenant General Yilma Merdasa.

- **Bases:** The ETAF operates several air bases across Ethiopia, including the Central Air Base in HarerMeda, the Eastern Air Base in Dire Dawa, the Northern Air Base in Mekelle, and the Western Air Base in Bahir Dar.

Aircraft and Equipment

- **Fighter Aircraft:** The fleet includes MiG-21, MiG-23, Su-27, and Su-30 fighter jets.
- **Attack Helicopters:** The air force operates Mil Mi-24 and Mil Mi-35 attack helicopters.
- **Transport Aircraft:** The transport fleet includes Antonov An-12, Antonov An-26, and Lockheed C-130 Hercules.

- **Training Aircraft:** Training aircraft include the Aermacchi SF-260, Aero L-39 Albatros, and Grob G 120TP.

Roles and Missions

- **Air Defense:** The primary mission is to defend Ethiopia's airspace from any adversaries and ensure air superiority.
- **Support to Ground Forces:** The ETAF provides close air support to land and special forces during military operations.
- **Disaster Response:** The air force is equipped to respond promptly to natural and man-made disasters.

- **Peacekeeping:** The ETAF participates in regional, continental, and international UN peacekeeping missions.

Vision and Values

- **Vision:** To be one of the leading air forces in Africa by 2030 through innovation, modern technology, and professional human resources.
- **Core Values:** Integrity, service before self, and excellence in all endeavors.

The Ethiopian Air Force continues to play a vital role in the defense and security of Ethiopia,

adapting to modern challenges and maintaining a strong presence in the region.

The Ark of the Covenant, also known as the Ark of the Testimony or the Ark of God, is one of the most sacred objects in biblical tradition. It is described as a wooden chest covered in gold, with an ornate lid known as the Mercy Seat. The Ark was believed to house the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and a pot of manna.

Protection and Guarding of the Ark

1. **Cherubim Guardians:**

- The Ark was adorned with two cherubim, angelic beings, whose wings stretched over the Mercy Seat. These cherubim were believed to guard the presence of God, which was said to dwell above the Ark.

- The cherubim's role as guardians is rooted in their depiction in various ancient Near Eastern cultures, where similar figures were seen as protectors of sacred spaces.

2. **Priestly Care:**

- The Levites, a tribe of Israel, were entrusted with the care and transportation of the Ark. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies,

where the Ark was kept, and only once a year on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

- The Ark was carried using poles inserted through rings on its sides, ensuring that no one would touch it directly, as touching the Ark was believed to result in death.

3. **Divine Protection:**

- The Ark was believed to have divine protection. Several biblical accounts describe miraculous events associated with the Ark, such as the parting of the Jordan River and the fall of the walls of Jericho.

- The Ark's presence was also said to bring blessings to those who housed it and curses to those who mistreated it.

4. **Historical Accounts:**

- Throughout history, the Ark was moved to various locations, including the Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, and eventually, it is believed to have been hidden to protect it from invaders.

- Some traditions, particularly in Ethiopian Christianity, claim that the Ark is housed in the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Axum, Ethiopia, guarded by a single monk who is the only person allowed to see it.

The Ark of the Covenant remains a powerful symbol of faith, divine presence, and protection in various religious traditions. Its legacy continues to inspire awe and reverence.